

UPCOMING EVENTS AND INITIATIVES

Women's Megillah Reading

Celebrate 25 years of women reading the Megillah on Purim morning at Shearith Israel. Contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at lrohde-csi@yahoo.com to participate.

Sisterhood Purim Greeting Card Project

Send Purim notifications to friends! Go online at shearithisrael.org/sisterhoodmanot fill out the form and pay by credit card. Deadline: March 1. For more information, please contact Mrs. Lisa Rohde at lrohde-csi@yahoo.com or Mrs. Carla Schein at scheinc6@gmail.com.

Megillah Reading and Purim Community Dinner Wednesday, March 4 | 6:30 pm

Join us for Megillah reading in our beautiful Main Sanctuary while children ages 3-10 are treated to a special Purim puppet show with Wondersparks – “Esther Saves the Day: A Purim Shpiel.” After Megillah, all are welcome to join us for a festive community dinner. While Rabbi Soloveichik captivates us with a Purim talk, our younger members will be entertained by Balloon Twisters, a Magician, and a costume parade. Babysitting will be provided. To register, go to shearithisrael.org/purimdinner. Sponsorship opportunities available.

Mishloah Manot Deliveries

Help fulfill a beautiful mitzvah and bring joy into someone's life. Help us deliver Mishloah Manot packages to the elderly and homebound after Megillah reading on Purim day, March 5. Volunteer by emailing Alana Shultz at ashultz@shearithisrael.org. Alana will then send you a link so that you can sign up to deliver to addresses that are convenient to you. See Alana to pick up the packages.

Learners' Service

Saturday, March 7 | 9:45 am | Little Synagogue

'Eat, Pray, Learn' in an inviting atmosphere geared toward those new to full Shabbat services. Learn the prayers, meet friends and gain insight and inspiration with Rabbi Shalom Morris. We join afterwards for a social Kiddush luncheon in the Elias Room accompanied by explanations of the customs, rituals, songs and prayers of Shabbat meals.

Heretics and History: The Retrial of Spinoza The grand finale to a 3-part-series with Rabbi Soloveichik Sunday, March 8 | 4:30 pm

The excommunication of Baruch (Benedict) Spinoza by the Jews of Amsterdam is one of the most famous events in modern Jewish history. Who was Spinoza and what did he believe? Why were his views seen as so dangerous by Dutch Jews? Was the excommunication justified? In what way is the story of his excommunication relevant to us as Jews today? Join us in our majestic sanctuary for a 21st century re-trial of Spinoza featuring a cast of esteemed rabbis, scholars and jurists, as well as an appearance by Spinoza himself.

Go to shearithisrael.org/spinoza to register. Sponsorship opportunities are available.

Friday Night Lights&Bites Post-Purim Hilkhof of Cocktails | March 6

Join us for Kiddush, motzi, cocktails and light hors d'oeuvres. For registered guests. To Register: shearithisrael.org/bites

Indian cooking class with Fiona Amiel Co-sponsored with the Shearith Israel league, JICNY and JDC Entwine

Wednesday, March 18 | 7:00 pm | Levy Auditorium
Love Indian food? Join Shearith Israel member, Fiona Amiel for an interactive cooking demo while learning about the Jewish communities in India. Take advantage of this great opportunity to learn and taste authentic Jewish Indian food and to take home amazing recipes. Cost \$10. To register, go to shearithisrael.org/Indian-Cooking.

Shearith Israel Book Club

8:00pm | Wednesdays March 11, April 15, and May 13

Location in a private home | Esther Hidary

Join the Shearith Israel book club! RSVP to ehidary@gmail.com and start reading! The first book is “The Betrayers” by David Bezmozgis.

Our next public tour is:
Tuesday, March 10 at 11:00 am

Meet with our Parnas

Our Parnas would be delighted to meet with you. Please schedule a visit at parnas@shearithisrael.org.

WEEKDAY JUDAIC EDUCATION

View all our spring classes at shearithisrael.org/education

Sunday

- ◇ **Psalms and Spirituality** | Rabbi Hidary | 8:40 am
- ◇ **Saadia Gaon's Emunot ve'Deot on Revelation and Commandments** | Sjimon den Hollander | 9:30 am

Monday

- ◇ **Maimonides' Guide for the Perplexed on Prophecy** | Rabbi Hidary | 7:00 pm
- ◇ **YL Monday Night Learning *** | 7:00 pm
- ◇ **Hebruta Program*** | 7:15 pm
- ◇ **Living Jewish** | Rabbi Morris | 7:30 pm
- ◇ **Bet Midrash** | 8:00 pm

Spring semester sponsored by Josh Eisen and Bruce Roberts and Joy Saleh Roberts

- ◇ **Rambam Rules for Young Professionals** | Rabbi Morris | 8:30 pm

**In partnership with JICNY*

Tuesday

- ◇ **Shulhan Arukh** | Rabbi Hidary | 7:45 am
- ◇ **Jewish Time: The Festivals in Halakha and Jewish Thought- A Class for Women** | Rabbi Soloveichik | 9:00 am
- ◇ **History of the Sephardim, the Spanish & Portuguese Jews** | Rabbi Morris | 6:45 - 7:30 pm
- ◇ **Talmud Class: Tractate Berakhot and the Philosophy of Jewish Prayer** | Rabbi Soloveichik | 8:00 pm

Wednesday

- ◇ **Parashat Hashabua** | Esther Hidary | 10:00 am (Special Purim class this week!)

Learn to Read Hebrew

Level 1: Sundays 10:00 am - 11:00 am

Level 2/3: Thursdays 6:45 - 7:45 pm

To sign up: shearithisrael.org/hebrewclasses

Tai Chi with Lewis Paleias | Thursdays at 11:00 am

Purim Schedule at a Glance

Wednesday, March 4

Fast Begins.....	5:34 pm
Shahrit Service.....	7:15 am
Minhah (men wear tefillin).....	5:30 pm
Arbit.....	6:00 pm
End of Fast.....	6:11 pm
Reading of the Megillah.....	6:15 pm
Purim Dinner (For Registered Guests).....	following megillah
Late Evening Reading of Megillah.....	8:00 pm

Thursday, March 5

Shahrit Service.....	7:15 am
Morning Reading of Megillah.....	8:00 am
Women's Megillah Reading.....	8:00 am
Late Morning Reading of Megillah.....	11:00 am
Minhah & Arbit.....	5:30 pm

Friday, March 6 (Purim Shushan)

Shahrit.....	7:15 am
FNL&Bites: Hilkhhot Cocktails (for registered guests)	

Matanot L'evyonim

One of the central mitzvot of Purim is charity, *matanot la-ebyonim*. Please contribute to the Rabbi's Discretionary Fund indicating the purpose "Purim" before Purim, so that Rabbi Soloveichik can distribute funds to the poor on Purim morning on your behalf, and facilitate your fulfillment of this mitzvah.

Hazakah U'berukha to Janet Kirschheimer whose project, in collaboration with Aliza Augustine, "How to Spot One of Us," an exhibit detailing the experiences of Holocaust survivors through poetry and film, is on display until May 18 at the Human Rights Institute Gallery at Kean University in Union County, NJ.

We mourn the passing of four members:

Jeanine Franco Deutsch. We express condolences to her children Allan Deutsch and Colette Ebert.

Sarita Haddad. We express condolences to her daughters, Marcie Sillam, Donna Haddad, and, Lisa Haddad Hoke.

The Fast of Esther, the First Converso

Rabbi Richard Hidary

This coming Wednesday, we will refrain from eating in commemoration of the three day fast that Esther and Jews took upon themselves twenty-four centuries ago. The requirement to reenact her fast is surprising not only because she fasted on Passover in Nisan, not on Adar 13 before Purim. Second, unlike other rabbinic fasts that memorialize past tragedy, the threat of Haman never materialized and in fact ended with joy. Third, this fast is not mentioned in the Megillah or anywhere in the Talmud and first crops up as a requirement in ninth century Babylonia. Why, then, did this custom catch on and become a halakhic requirement?

Perhaps Jews in the centuries after the Second Temple's destruction identified their plight more with Esther's distress than with her celebration. Living in exile under foreign rule in hostile cultures, trying to use whatever political connections they could to save their lot, they felt as unsure about their futures as Esther did before meeting Ahashverosh to plead for her people. Of course, Jews celebrated Purim and Passover too because they had deep faith that God would save them again. (That's why we wouldn't fast in Nisan as Esther did.) Nevertheless, they also wanted to commemorate the process of bringing redemption through fasting, prayer, and repentance.

This theory is only a conjecture for the Geonic period, but it is a fact for the later Conversos. The story of Purim resonated strongly with crypto-Jews who, like Esther, could not reveal their religion and had to practice halakha only in private. For this reason, the fast of Esther became perhaps the most important day on the Converso calendar. The guidelines of the Spanish Inquisition reveal that observing the fast of Esther was a greater indicator of Judaizing activity than was celebrating Purim itself!

Fascinatingly, the Conversos knew Megilat Esther not from the Hebrew version but rather from the Catholic Bible, which includes six additional chapters that date back to the Septuagint translation. These text were so popular that they could be recited by heart by Mariana Nunez, a Judaizer in 16th cent. Mexico. One of these additions is a prayer recited by Esther who declares:

You know the conscience of the heart and you know that I hate the splendor of the wicked and abhor the bed of the uncircumcised and of any alien. You know my necessity -- that I abhor the sign of my proud position... And your servant has not eaten at Haman's table, and I have not honored the king's feast or drunk the wine of the libations. Your servant has had no joy since the day that I was brought here until now, except in You, O Lord God of Abraham. O God, whose might is over all, hear the voice of the despairing, and save us from the hands of evildoers. And save me from my fear!"

Esther pledges to God and to herself that although she receives all the material benefits of a Persian queen, she does not enjoy her position and her true allegiance is with her God and her people. Let us use the fast of Esther and the feast of Purim to celebrate our own freedom to practice our Judaism publicly and with pride.



CONGREGATION SHEARITH ISRAEL

The Spanish & Portuguese Synagogue Shabbat Tetsavveh-Zachor

February 27-28, 2015

CANDLE LIGHTING | 5:27 pm

MINHAH | 5:30 pm

FRIDAY NIGHT LIGHTS | following services | Rabbi Soloveichik gives a talk on: "The Joy of Lamentation: The Shabbat Sermons of Rabbi Norman Lamm"

2014-2015 season sponsored by the Julis family

YOUNG MEMBERS + FRIENDS SHABBAT DINNER | following Friday Night Lights | Elias Room | For registered guests

ZEMIROT | 8:15 am | Main Sanctuary

SHAHARIT (NISHMAT) | 9:00 am | Rabbi Soloveichik delivers a sermon entitled: "The Talmud of Westminster Abbey"

MEANING AND MELODY | Rabbi Morris gives a talk on the topic of "Sing it Like You Mean it: Az Yashir and the Lesson of Jewish Unity" | 10:00 am | Little Synagogue

TOT SHABBAT | Ages 0-4 | 10:00 am | Elias Room

Featuring Rabbi Morris at 11:00 am

YOUTH GROUPS | Ages 5-12 | 10:00 am | Children's library

ASSIGNED JR. CONGREGATION Ages 5-12 | 10:30 am | Little Synagogue
Next Assigned Jr. Congregation is March 28

KIDDUSH LUNCHEON | Levy auditorium | *Sponsored by Melissa Pearlman & Bruce Cohen in honor of their forthcoming wedding and the Hebra Hased Va'Amet*

PARASHAT HASHABUAH: THE PARTS THEY SKIP IN HIGH SCHOOL | Rabbi Hidary | 4:20 pm | For high school students | Held at the Hidarys' home, 1 W 85th St Apartment 6A

SEUDAH SHELISHIT & PIRKEI ABOT SHIUR

Rabbi Soloveichik | 4:20 pm

Spring Semester Sponsored by Lewis Lipsey

MINHAH/ARBIT | 5:20 pm

KETER SHEM TOB | Rabbi Hidary | Main Sanctuary

HABDALAH | 6:18 pm

MUSICAL HABDALAH | 7:00 pm